

needed if the veteran is to be rehabilitated; or

(2) The veteran's situation presents special problems due to nonservice-connected disability, family pressures, etc., and a number of special and supportive services are needed to effect rehabilitation.

(e) *Serious employment handicap normally not found.* A finding of serious employment handicap will normally not be made when a veteran's service-connected disability is rated at less than thirty percent disabling. A finding of serious employment handicap may nevertheless be made when:

(1) The veteran's service-connected disability has caused substantial periods of unemployment or unstable work history;

(2) The veteran has demonstrated a pattern of maladaptive behavior which is shown by a history of withdrawal from society or continuing dependency on government income support programs; and

(f) *Responsibility for determining serious employment handicap.* A counseling psychologist in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division shall make determinations of serious employment handicap.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(a))

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984, as amended at 54 FR 37332, Sept. 8, 1989]

§21.53 Reasonable feasibility of achieving a vocational goal.

(a) *Requirement.* The Department of Veterans Affairs shall determine the reasonable feasibility of achieving a vocational goal in each case in which a veteran has either:

- (1) An employment handicap, or
- (2) A serious employment handicap.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(a))

(b) *Definition.* The term *vocational goal* means a gainful employment status consistent with the veteran's abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3101(8))

(c) *Expeditious determination.* The determination of reasonable feasibility shall be made as expeditiously as possible when necessary information has

been developed in the course of initial evaluation. If an extended evaluation is necessary as provided in §21.57 a decision of feasibility shall be made by the end of the extended evaluation. Any reasonable doubt shall be resolved in favor of a finding of feasibility.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3105(d))

(d) *Vocational goal is reasonably feasible.* Achievement of a vocational goal is reasonably feasible for a veteran with either an employment or serious employment handicap when the following conditions are met:

(1) Vocational goal(s) has (have) been identified;

(2) The veteran's physical and mental conditions permit training for the goal(s) to begin within a reasonable period; and

(3) The veteran:

(i) Possesses the necessary educational skills and background to pursue the vocational goal; or

(ii) Will be provided services by the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop such necessary educational skills as part of the program.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3104(a)(1), 3106(a))

(e) *Criteria for reasonable feasibility not met.* (1) When VA finds that the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section are not met, but VA has not determined that achievement of a vocational goal is not currently reasonably feasible, VA shall provide the rehabilitation services contained in §21.35(i)(1)(i) of this part as appropriate;

(2) A finding that achievement of a vocational goal is infeasible without a period of extended evaluation requires compelling evidence which establishes infeasibility beyond any reasonable doubt.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3104(a)(1), 3106(b))

(f) *Independent living services.* The counseling psychologist shall determine the current reasonable feasibility of a program of independent living services in each case in which a vocational rehabilitation program is not found reasonably feasible. The concurrence of the Vocational Rehabilitation

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and Employment (VR&C) Officer is required in any case in which the counseling psychologist does not approve a program of independent living services.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3100)

(g) *Responsible staff.* A counseling psychologist in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division shall determine whether achievement of a vocational goal is:

(1) Reasonably feasible; or

(2) Not currently reasonably feasible under the provisions of paragraph (e) of this section for the purpose of determining present eligibility to receive a program of independent living services.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(b), Pub. L. 99-576)

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984, as amended at 53 FR 50956, Dec. 19, 1988; 54 FR 37332, Sept. 8, 1989]

§ 21.57 Extended evaluation.

(a) *Purpose.* The purpose of an extended evaluation for a veteran with a serious employment handicap is to determine the current feasibility of the veteran achieving a vocational goal, when this decision reasonably cannot be made on the basis of information developed during the initial evaluation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(c), Pub. L. 99-576)

(b) *Scope of services.* During the extended evaluation, a veteran may be provided:

(1) Diagnostic and evaluative services;

(2) Services to improve his or her ability to attain a vocational goal;

(3) Services to improve his or her ability to live and function independently in the community;

(4) An allowance as provided in § 21.260.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3104)

(c) *Determination.* (1) The determination of the reasonable feasibility of a veteran achieving a vocational goal will be made at the earliest time possible during an extended evaluation, but not later than the end of the period of evaluation, or an extension of that period. Any reasonable doubt as to fea-

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sibility will be resolved in the veteran's favor;

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(d))

(2) When it is reasonably feasible for the veteran to achieve a vocational goal, an individualized written rehabilitation plan (IWRP) will be developed as indicated in § 21.84 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(b))

(d) *Responsibility for determining the need for a period of extended evaluation.* A counseling psychologist in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division shall determine whether a period of extended evaluation is needed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3106(c))

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984, as amended at 53 FR 50956, Dec. 19, 1988; 54 FR 37332, Sept. 8, 1989; 62 FR 17707, Apr. 11, 1997]

§ 21.58 Redetermination of employment handicap and serious employment handicap.

(a) *Prior to induction into a program.* A determination as to employment handicap, serious employment handicap, or eligibility for a program of employment services will not be changed except for:

(1) Unmistakable error in fact or law; or

(2) New and material evidence which justifies a change.

(b) *After induction into a program.* (1) The Department of Veterans Affairs will not redetermine a finding of employment handicap, serious employment handicap, or eligibility for a program of employment services subsequent to the veteran's induction into a program because of a reduction in his or her disability rating, including a reduction to 0 percent:

(2) The Department of Veterans Affairs may consider whether a finding of employment handicap should be changed to serious employment handicap when there is an increase in the degree of service-connected disability, or other significant change in the veteran's situation;

(3) A redetermination of employment handicap, serious employment handicap, or eligibility for a program of employment services will be made when